CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for processing travelers crossing international borders, comprising:

2 a.) prior to the time of travel, enrolling a traveler to utilize an automated check-in

3 process; and

4 b.) at the time of travel, utilizing an automated check-in process to complete

5 activities necessary to enable an international border crossing.

1 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein step a.) includes:

2 obtaining an image of a travel document; and

3 comparing the image to an image on file with an enrollment official.

1 3. The method of Claim 2, wherein

2 the obtaining step includes scanning the travel document to obtain a digital

3 image; and

4 the comparing step includes comparing the digital image to a digital image on file

5 with the enrollment official.

1 4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the travel document is selected from the group

2 consisting of passports and Official Travel Documents (OTDs).

1   5.   The method of Claim 2, wherein step a.) includes collecting unique identification

2   indicia from the traveler for use in performing identification verification on the day of

3   travel.

1   6.   The method of Claim 5, wherein the identification indicia includes biometric data.

1   7.   The method of Claim 6, wherein the biometric data is selected from a group

2   consisting of handwriting samples, iris scans, hand or finger geometry, facial scans,

3   facial geometry measurements, hand scans, fingerprint samples, physical

4   measurements, and voice samples.

1   8.   The method of Claim 5, wherein the biometric data includes at least two different

2   types of biometric samples.

1   9.   The method of Claim 5, and further including storing the identification indicia for

2   use during the automated check-in process.

1   10.   The method of Claim 9, wherein step b.) includes

2   retrieving the record;

3   collecting unique identification indicia from the traveler; and

4   automatically comparing the collected identification indicia to the stored

5   identification indicia to verify identity of the traveler.

1 11.   The method of Claim 10, wherein the retrieving step includes:

2   scanning a travel document; and

3   using information on the travel document to retrieve the stored identification

4 indicia.

1 12.   The method of Claim 10, and further including automatically verifying that the

2 traveler's itinerary qualifies the user to use the automated check-in process.

1 13.   The method of Claim 10, and further including automatically prompting the

2 traveler to electronically complete at least one questionnaire required for the

3 international border crossing.

1 14.   The method of Claim 13, and further including checking the at least one

2 completed questionnaire to determine whether the traveler is eligible to utilize an

3 automated clearance process after the international border has been crossed.

1 15.   The method of Claim 10, and further including automatically printing documents

2 to allow the traveler to embark on the international border crossing.

1 16.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the automated check-in process is performed on

2 a self-service kiosk.

1   17.   The method of Claim 1, and including performing one or more automated checks

2   to determine whether the traveler poses any risk to the country of destination.

1   18.   The method of Claim 17, wherein the checks are selected from the group

2   consisting of a criminal check, a terrorist check, an agricultural check, and an

3   immigration check.

1   19.   The method of Claim 17, and further including, after the international border

2   crossing has been completed, utilizing an automated clearance process to allow the

3   traveler to enter a country.

1   20.   The method of Claim 19, wherein the automated clearance process includes:

2   verifying the identity of the traveler;

3   obtaining results of the one or more automated checks;

4   if any of the automated checks failed, requiring the traveler to undergo a manual

5   clearance process; and

6   if all of the automated checks passed, allowing the user to enter the country of

7   destination without undergoing the manual clearance process.

1   21.   The method of Claim 20, and further including enabling an automated exit gate to

2   allow a user to enter the country of destination.

1　22.　The method of Claim 10, wherein the storing step includes creating a secure

2　token storing the identification indicia.

1　23.　A system for performing automated processing of a traveler crossing an

2　international border, comprising:

3　　　a data processing system to enroll a traveler to use an automated check-in

4　procedure; and

5　　　a first user interaction system coupled to the data processing to provide the

6　automated check-in procedure that automatically initiates activities necessary to allow

7　the traveler to cross the international border.

1　24.　The system of Claim 23, and further including a second user interaction system

2　coupled to the data processing system to provide an automated clearance procedure

3　that automatically initiates activities necessary to allow the traveler to enter a country of

4　destination after the international border has been crossed.

1　25.　The system of Claim 24, wherein at least one of the first and the second user

2　interaction systems are self-service kiosks.

1　26.　The system of Claim 24, wherein at least one of the first and the second user

2　interaction systems includes at least one biometric reader to read biometric samples

3　from the traveler.

1   27.   The system of Claim 24, wherein at least one of the first and the second user

2   interaction systems includes a scanner to scan travel documents.

1   28.   The system of Claim 24, wherein the first user interaction system obtains data

2   from the traveler that is required to allow entry into the country of destination.

1   29.   The system of Claim 28, wherein at least one of the data processing system and

2   the first user interaction system includes means for checking the data to determine

3   whether the traveler is allowed to utilize the second user interaction system to complete

4   the automated clearance procedure.

1   30.   The system of Claim 29, wherein at least one of the data processing system and

2   the first and second user interaction systems includes means to initiate automated

3   checks to determine whether the traveler poses any threat to the country of destination.

1   31.   A system for managing the crossing of an international border by a traveler,

2   comprising:

3   enrollment means for enrolling the traveler in an automated travel process; and

4   automated user interface means for allowing the user to participate in the

5   automated travel process that completes all activities required for entry into a country

6   without the need for human intervention.

1   32.   The system of Claim 31, wherein the automated user interface means includes:

2   first means for automatically performing check-in activities before crossing the

3   border; and

4   second means for automatically performing clearance activities after crossing the

5   border.